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ABSTRACT

A discussion of text translatability in simultaneous interpreting (SI) looks at semantic redundancy, the repetition of semantic components essential to creating an utterance, and offers some classroom techniques for teaching interpreting skills. It is proposed that the translatability of a text in SI should be studied in terms of the experiential and cognitive models used in the making of its sentences, i.e., whether they are the result of one-domain mapping (iconic or metonymic) or two-domain mapping. A text can be handled optimally in SI if the predominant types of mapping in the making of its utterances are one-domain iconic mapping; one-domain metonymic mapping, with the same part; whole relationship in the two languages; and two-domain metaphorical mapping with some restrictions. Most SI training is oriented toward increasing knowledge of the language used in some major fields, coping with grammatical difficulties, and developing memory and attention. However, the semantics of the utterance should also be addressed by helping students cope with language-specific cognitive mapping, particularly in a workshop format. Class exercises using: (1) exemplary analysis with instruction for individual work; and (2) report-with-discussion are useful for this type of training. (MSE)

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THE OPTIMUM TEXT IN SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETING. A COGNITIVE APPROACH TO INTERPRETERS' TRAINING

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I. The Optimum Text in Simultaneous Interpreting

The practice of Simultaneous Interpreting (SI) has shown that not all types of texts can be translated under the difficult conditions characterizing it (e.g. simultaneity of Speaker's and Interpreter's performance, great speed of delivery of the Source Language (SL) text, lack of knowledge about the following context, a single reception of the SI text (no play-back), etc. etc.) and the examples of untranslatable texts provided are usually from belles-lettres, poetry in particular, films and theatrical performances (e.g. Chernov, 1987:131). The label "literary text" alone is not sufficient, however, since it cannot explain why one can interpret simultaneously the beginning of the paragraph given in (1-a) from M.Drabble's "A Summer Bird-Cage", but not its end (1-b).

(1-a) Depressed by this sad story, I asked Gill what she was going to do next: she seemed neither to know nor to care.

(1-b) She said, loudly, 'I expect everyone's been listening in to this little chat, don't you think? It ought to warn people off. Talk about blighting the marriage hearse with a few odd tears.' (M.Drabble, p.44).

Obviously, it is necessary to more rigorously define the parameters which make a text translatable or not, under the difficult conditions of SI. One such attempt has been made, and

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successfully at that, in the study of the different types and degrees of redundancy of the SL text in SI (e.g. Chernov, 1975, 1978,1987; Alexieva, 1978,1980), based mainly on Miller's discussion of redundancy as the repetition of semantic components in a message and their inter-relationship (Miller, 1963:103, after Chernov, 1987:79). Particularly important have been the distinctions between:

1/ Systemic and textual redundancy (the first resulting from the specificity of the respective language system and the second, from the way a text is built, e.g. in terms of semantic repetition and anaphoricity, in particular);

2/ Objective and subjective redundancy, by means of which one can capture the Interpreter's knowledge of the topic discussed in the SL text, highly relevant to the way the probability prediction mechanism operates (e.g. Alexieva, 1978, 1980; Chernov, 1987:90), and

3/ Semantic and semiotic redundancy, based on the complementary use of language and the other semiotic systems, particularly in face-to-face communication, when a semantic component expressed by a linguistic sign is also expressed by a sign from another semiotic system involved in the communicative act (e.g. the elements of the communicative situation, and of the setting in particular).

From amongst all these, I shall now focus on the issue of semantic repetition, i.e. of the repetition of semantic components described as a sine quo non condition in combining words together to make an utterance (as a sentence actualized in speech). An attempt to capture it has been made by Greimas (1966), Gakk (1972, 1977) and Apressjan (1974) formulating it as the Law of Semantic Agreement, a version of which says that "... two words can combine

if, apart from their specific, distinctive features, they also have some features in common, or at least, features which are not incompatible" (Gakk, 1977:23; see also Chernov, 1987:60).

If two, three or more words can be combined to make an utterance, then there must be some sort of semantic relationship between them. But what is the type of this relationship? Is it direct or indirect, simple or more complex? And can it be handled in terms of semantic features alone? Such a strategy can be employed in handling segments such as, for example "I asked Gill" from (1-a). The verb "ask" can be described as requiring an Agent and an Addressee, both marked as /HUMAN, CAPABLE OF PRODUCING/RECEIVING VERBAL MESSAGES/, that is, the feature /HUMAN/ can be assigned to the three words it consists of - the verb, the personal pronoun and the proper name.

But this strategy will not work in analysing the last sentence of (1-b), and more specifically, "blighting the marriage hearse with a few odd tears". The first point to be made here is about "blight" meaning "to affect a plant with the disease blight (withering flowers)". The words with which it is combined here, however, make a link between the domain of plants and that of human experience, that is, in the same way as the disease may affect a plant, something may blight one's feelings, hopes, a joyful experience, which "marriage" - the "ceremony" in particular, is considered to be in most of the cases.

The second point to be made is about the combination "the marriage hearse". How should we treat the two words combined together in terms of the Law of Semantic Agreement given above? As containing incompatible features ('marriage' - the ceremony - /HAPPY/ and 'hearse' /SAD/), or as sharing common features? What

I shall argue for here is that the combination cannot be described in terms of semantic features (or components) alone, but by means of predications and sets of predications, for the vehicle in which a married couple is driven is compared to the one used in funerals. The link between the two can be captured by the predication "X in $Domain_1$ is (like) Y in $Domain_2$" (The Domain of Marriages, D_1, and the Domain of Funerals, D_2), i.e. the feature /SAD/ of Y (the hearse), in D_2 is assigned to X in D_1, and the message of the author about an unhappy marriage acquires prominence and has a great pragmatic effect on the reader.

Sentences such as this are the result of the employment of the cognitive model labelled as "two-domain metaphorical mapping" (Lakoff, 1987) and need more effort and time for retreiving the information they carry. Unlike them, sentences such as (1-a) are easier to comprehend, for they are iconic and the description remains within the same domain, that is, the event (participants and relationships between them) is iconically mapped onto the mental space, and via it, onto the surface structure.

The examples discussed breifly above suggest that the translatibility/untranslatability of a text in SI should also be studied in terms of the experiential and cognitive models employed in the making of its sentences, that is, whether they are the result of:

1/ ONE-DOMAIN MAPPING, with the further distinction between:

(a) Iconic mapping, where the predication selected for overt expression comes intact to the surface, with an explicit rendering of all the participants and relationships between them, e.g. "I asked Gill" in (1-a), and

(b) Metonymic mapping, where a part of a predication is selected for explicit rendering in order to represent the whole,

e.g. (2) One waitress says to another. "The hamsandwich spilled beer all over himself" (Lakoff, 1980), i.e. from the predication "The man eating the hamsandwich", it is only the latter part that is given overt expression.

2/ TWO-DOMAIN MAPPING, where a participant, or the activity he is involved in, from one domain, D_1, is compared to a participant or the activity in another domain, D_2, with a linking predication "X in D_1 is (like) Y in D_2".

Some of these metonymic and metaphorical mappings have become so well established in the language that its users are not aware of them, e.g. (3) "Mathematics has many branches", based on the metaphor "Knowledge is like a plant" (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980), i.e. they are not felt as cases of metaphor or metonymy at all and native speakers are even unaware of the difficulty a foreigner may have in understanding and translating them properly. Examples such as these may also create difficulties in the restructuring phase, for if "X in D_1 is (like) Y in D_2" is the current metaphor in the Source Language, the choice of the second domain can be different in the Receptor Language. Thus, for example, in (4) "My friend from the TUI did try to cut my argument to ribbons, ...", in English the second domain is "destroying by cutting into ribbons (shreds)", while in Bulgarian the destruction of arguments, ideas, plants, etc., is associated with reducing something to fluff and dust.

Obviously, the retrieval of information and probability prediction in SI do not depend only on whether a combination of two, or more, words is based on their having common semantic features, but on the complexity of the relationship between them, that is, whether it is direct and expandable in only one predication (e.g. (1-a) "I asked Gill") or it is indirect and expandable

in a greater number of predications, as is the case with the metaphorical mapping in (1-b) "blighting the marriage hearse".

We can therefore add one more parameter in defining the optimum text in SI and it is the type of mapping employed in the making of its utterances, i.e. the way a real scene is mapped onto mental space and via it, onto the surface structure.

From what has been said so far one may predict that a text can be handled with an optimum adequacy in SI if the predominant types of mapping in the making of its utterances are: One-Domain Iconic Mapping; One-Domain Metonymic Mapping, however with the same PART:WHOLE relationship in the two languages, and Two-Domain Metaphoric Mapping, however in the cases with an isomorphic choice of the second domain (D_2) and the Entities 'X' and 'Y' and their features in the linking predication PN/A ('X' of D_1) + P (Be:(LIKE) 'Y' of D_2)/.

All the other cases of One-Domain Metonymic and Two-Domain Metaphorical mappings will diminish the Interpreter's capacity to unravel the complex relationship obtaining between the words of an utterance and will increase the number of alternative versions of interpretation of its meaning and of the hypothesis concerning the following context. The latter may block the probability prediction mechanism, thus making one more demand - and a Herculean demand at that - on the Interpreter's resourcefulness and creativity.

II. A Cognitive Approach to Interpreters' Training. Teaching Strategies

It is therefore suggested that part of our efforts should be directed towards overcoming the difficulties arising from the language-and-culture specific application of the universal cogni-

tive and experiential models.

The discussion offered above of the optimum text in SI does not certainly claim that non-optimum texts do not occur in SI. On the contrary, analysis of conference data give ample evidence in support of the claim that not only in socio-political, but also in economic and scientific papers one comes across a large number of metonymic and metaphorical mappings and not only of the "dead" type, that is, the one "we live by" (of whose metaphorical nature we may not be even aware of), but also "fresh", new metaphors, as for instance the notorious example of "electrons cascading down into oblivion" (a quotation from a book on Physics, made by a physicist at a conference).

Most Simultaneous Interpreters' Training courses are, to my knowledge, mostly oriented towards:

(i) Increasing the future interpreters' knowledge of the language used in some major fields of the sciences, the humanities, technology, etc., with particular focus on the terminology used in them and specific stylistic characteristics, e.g. Shchekina's book on SI for the pair "Italian-Russian", Moscow, 1986;

(ii) Coping with grammatical difficulties, mostly syntactic issues relevant to the retrieval of information, e.g. the position of the verb in German (Gofmann and Kourilenko, Moscow, 1987), and

(iii) Memory and attention training, etc.

What I shall argue for here is that the semantics of the sentence (or rather of the utterance, as a sentence actualized in speech) should also be given due attention, because the way we verbalize our thoughts and experience, the way we use language in terms of. implicitness/explicitness, iconicity/non-iconicity and one- or two-domain mapping, is highly relevant to a quick and adequate retrieval of the SL text and its rendering in the RL in

the difficult conditions of SI.

There is sufficient evidence gleaned both from conferences and from SI training classes to support the claim that sentences - the result of iconic mapping, are much easier to interpret even if they contain a large number of terms. Example (5), for instance, was satisfactorily interpreted even by the students, while (6) and (7), though easier from a terminological point of view, caused a hitch in their performance (55% stumbled over "a nodding acquaintance" and lost a few precious seconds; about 65% - over "the pass-through", while about 50% could not find the proper Bulgarian metaphor for "retreated", for in Bulgarian prices do not retreat - they "fall" or diminish).

(5) The separation of the doublet provides information on the geometry of the atom's immediate environment. (from a paper on Mössbauer spectroscopy)

(6) I assume that the students have attended the normal undergraduate courses on quantum mechanics and have a nodding acquaintance with the elementary properties of finite groups. (from a lecture)

(7) Many economists considered the 5 per cent increase in inflation mostly as the result of the pass-through into other goods of higher oil prices, which have since retreated. (from a conference)

The reaction of Simultaneous Interpreting trainees to examples such as (6) and (7) suggests that what we need is the elaboration of teaching strategies which would help them cope with difficulties arising from language specific cognitive mappings.

The major tactics to be employed, in my view, will have to aim at ensuring:

(i) A proper selection of texts for Simultaneous Interpreting classes, with more iconic texts at the beginning and a gradual increase of the level of difficulty in terms of a movement from Iconicity and One-Domain Models towards Non-Iconicity

and Two-Domain Models, and

(ii) The attainment, on the part of students, of a deeper knowledge and better command of the similarities and dissimilarities in the application of the cognitive models in the two languages.

It is to the second of these goals that the remaining part of this paper will be devoted.

III. Workshop on the Language-and-Culture Specific Application of Universal Cognitive and Experiential Models

Metonymic and metaphorical expressions which have become general currency, that is, the "dead" ones, the ones that "we live by" and of whose metaphorical natures we are even unaware, are usually treated as problems of the phraseology and idioms-stock of a language. And the learners of a foreign language are expected to learn them in the same way as they learn a word, as something fixed, fossilized, mostly unmotivated, without any effort to reveal the language mechanisms underlying them.

The expressions labelled as "genuine", on the other hand, are usually considered as belonging to the realm of literature and hence, the concern of literary stylistic alone.

Recent research in cognitive linguistics has shown that both the "dead" and the "genuine" ones are in fact the result of the operation of one and the same cognitive and experiential models and that deeper insight into these issues can be gained, and sounder knowledge of them acquired, if one delves more deeply into the mechanisms underlying these processes.

Taken in an applied perspective it would suggest that: (i) a thorough study of the "dead" ones may help us discover the mechanisms governing the appearance of the "genuine" ones and

correctly interpret their meaning, and (ii) a comparative analysis of the ways these models operate in a pair of languages will contribute to attaining better results in the translation not only of literature, but of all types of texts, Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpreting included.

What I shall argue for is that not only Literary Translation Training Programmes, but SI Training Programmes too should include a special subject which can be labelled as Language-and-Culture Specific Application of Cognitive and Experiential Models, or Cognitive and Experiential Models Workshop, for short. It should certainly be a workshop rather than a theoretical course of lectures, for what is needed is practical work and most of all discussion of what teacher and students can glean together about the ways the respective pair of languages are used to describe an extralinguistic situation- iconically, non-iconically, keeping to one domain, or resorting to a second one. The advantages of a workshop over a lecture course - provided the teacher ensures the necessary guidance and instruction - lie mainly in that:

1/ The students themselves will have to study a large number of foreign language texts (English in our case) in a certain field of knowledge in order to find the metonymic and metaphorical mappings they have been assigned to look for; diagnose the universal model underlying them and the specific way it is used in the Source Language (SL text;

2/ In the case of texts that have not been translated, the students themselves or their colleagues (used as informants) will have to translate them and find the answers to the same questions posed about the SL text, focussing on the similarities and dissimilarities between the types of mapping.

It is also considered as methodologically expedient that such a workshop should be started the very first term and be synchronized with the types of texts discussed in the Terminology Class and the SI classes proper.

Thus, for example, the SI classes with economic texts can be prepared - preliminarily and parallelly - by workshop discussions of the types of "Economy Metaphors". The students can be instructed to study different types of economic texts (written texts: - newspaper materials, research papers, monographic studies, books, etc., and spoken texts - recordings of lectures, radio and TV talks, and speeches delivered at conferences) and prepare a brief report summarizing the data collected.

Work in class can be roughly divided into the following two main types of sessions:

1/ Exemplary Analysis and Instruction for Individual Work. The teacher may open the discussion with the most general and pervading metaphor in the respective area of human experience. And in the case of economy, it can be the UP-DOWN Orientational (Spatialization) metaphor, which has a rich variety of sub-models, yielding isomorphic or non-isomorphic versions in Bulgarian, e.g. (8), where the English has the metaphor "MOVE DOWN" (the verb "fall") is "BECOME LESS", while the Bulgarian is iconic (namalyaha = diminished).

(8) Our stocks have fallen to a minimum. → Zapassite ni namalyaha do minimum (Gloss: Stocks our diminished to the minimum).

With another series of examples one may illustrate some of the most frequent expansions of the UP-DOWN metaphor, with a stress on the specific variations that often occur. In (9), for example, both languages employ the "MOVE UP IS GOOD" metaphor, however, in more specific versions. While the English original is

associated with "MOVING ROUND SO THAT THE TOP PART COMES UP" (the noun "upturn"), in the Bulgarian translation the metaphor "MOVE UP IS MORE" is associated with the movement of big masses of water, and via an extension, of social and political movements (the noun "podem" might be described as "upsurge").

(9) There is scanty evidence of upturn after a weak first quarter. → Ima mnogo slabi priznatzi na podem sled nezadovolitelnite rezultati prez purvoto trimessetchie (Gloss: There are very feeble symptoms of upsurge after the unsatisfactory results during the first quarter.)

The Instruction part of this session should first and foremost include suggestions concerning the type of second domain (D_2) Economy can be associated with. Students can be guided in this respect by giving them some of the more frequent domains economy is linked with, that is, for example, the metaphors "ECONOMY IS A BATTLEFIELD (WAR)"; "ECONOMY IS A ROAD"; "ECONOMY IS A STRUCTURE/CONSTRUCT/WHOLE"; "ECONOMY IS A LIVING ORGANISM", etc. This list will certainly suffice, for something must be left for the students to discover by themselves. Perhaps a hint might be useful concerning the possible extensions of each of these into adjacent domains, e.g. "ECONOMY IS A BATTLEFIELD" is closely connected with "ECONOMY IS A SPORTS EVENT/COMPETITION".

2/ <u>The "Report and Discussion" Session</u>. Among the other goals that can be attained by this type of class work (for example, the chance the students will have to give a report, i.e. to speak, which - as is well known - is of extreme importance for conference interpreting), the teacher has the opportunity, on the basis of the data supplied by the students, to:

(i) establish the similarities between the two languages in the choice of the second domain and the features on which the link is made - that is, to bring out and emphasize what is universal in

the way we cognize and experience the world and the way it is fixed in language, and

(ii) analyse the differences between the particular pair of languages, most of all those concerning the choice of the second domain (D_2), the distance between D_1 and D_2, and the features on which the metaphor is based.

For instance, a comparison of English and Bulgarian Economy Metaphors (using data from English-Bulgarian and Bulgarian-English translations and interpreting samples) has been conducive to the drawing of a number of more general inferences, namely, that:

(i) The "ECONOMY IS A BATTLEFIELD/WAR" metaphor seems to have a much higher frequency in Bulgarian;

(ii) The cognitive distance between the two domains, D_1 and D_2, in English does not seem to be subject to any restrictions, while in Bulgarian the distance usually is not great;

(iii) The tendency towards a closer distance between D_1 and D_2 in Bulgarian may account for the lack of metaphors with a greater distance such as, for instance, "ECONOMY IS A CLOTH" (an extension of "ECONOMY IS A WHOLE"), e.g. (10) The economy shrank in almost all sectors during the first three months of the year. → Ikonomikata otbelyaza spad prez purvite tri messetza na godinata (Gloss: "The economy marked a fall during ..." i.e. you cannot compare economy with a cloth in Bulgarian; see also the "CLOTH" metaphor in (4)).

(iv) The values of 'Y' and its features in the linking predication PN/A ('X' with features $x_1,x_2,x_3...x_n$ of $Domain_1$) + P (BE:(LIKE) 'Y' with features $y_1,y_2,y_3...y_n$ of $Domain_2$)/ in English tend to be more specific, while Bulgarian prefers more general ones. In (11), for instance, both languages employ the

metaphor "ECONOMY CAN BE/CAUSE ILLNESS" but the Bulgarian version is with the more general value ("boleduva" = be ill or "strada" = suffers), while the English is associated with a more specific illness (plague - to plague).

(11) The economic problems that have plagued the country for years remain. → Ekonomicheskite problemi, ot koito stranata boleduva (strada) dulgi godini, sa oshte neresheni/ostavat. (Gloss: The economic problems from which the country is ill/ suffers for long years, are still unsolved/remain.)

IV. Conclusions

Certainly, one cannot cover all the possible models and submodels operating in the creation of non-iconic metonymic and metaphorical expressions in a pair of languages. But exercises such as these will optimize the teaching process and help our trainees find out something about the prevailing tendencies; it will help them develop a way of thinking, of understanding how we cognize and experience the world and the way all this is fixed in, expressed by, language. An awareness of these models can improve and facilitate:

(i) The analysis of the SL text, for one can learn to more readily and easily extract and retrieve the more general meaning from a more specific metaphor;

(ii) The Probability Prediction mechanism will operate more smoothly, for the preparedness of the Interpreter for suprises of this kind will help him/her more calmly weigh up the possible alternative interpretations concerning the further unfolding of the utterance;

(iii) A previous knowledge of the way some basic models work in a pair of languages and the elaboration of a tactic for dealing with non-iconic metonymic and two-domain metaphorical

mappings is conducive to decreasing the tension in SI, to cushioning the shock an idiosyncratic metonymic or metaphorical expression may otherwise cause, resulting in a greater time-lag and failure to interpret the immediate following textual segment.

Thus a study of the building blocks of two languages in terms of the deep mechanisms underlying their combination - and not just like a list of words and idioms - will give the Simultaneous Interpreter a firmer grasp and better command of the ways an SL text can be transformed into an RL text under the difficult conditions of SI, and will help him/her cope with the Speaker's words, so often "cascading down into oblivion".

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